



Self-esteem levels of slum young women and perceptions on their health status and physical appearance

■ MUGDHA DESHPANDE AND DESETTY RAMANAMMA

See end of the paper for authors' affiliation

Correspondence to :
DESETTY RAMANAMMA
Department of Human
Development and Family
Studies, College of Home
Science, Vasantrao Naik
Marathwada Agricultural
University, PARBHANI (M.S.)
INDIA
Email: manraman_02@
rediffmail.com

ABSTRACT : Two hundred slum young women was chosen at random from the 10 slum areas of Parbhani town of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. Out of which 30 were from the middle SES group and the remaining 170 were from the low SES group. The age group of the slum young women ranged between 20yrs and 25yrs. The self-esteem scale for women developed by Kapadia and Verma was administered on them for assessing their self-esteem levels. Kuppaswamy's socio-economic status scale for urban population revised by Patnam (1992) was used to assess the socio-economic status of sample slum young women. The results reveal that majority (57%) of the selected slum young women were assessed to have low self-esteem level followed by medium level of self-esteem (29%) and high level of self-esteem (13%) irrespective of their low and middle SES groups. Family background variables such as family size, family type, age and education of fathers and mothers were found to have significant influence on their self-esteem levels. Significantly a higher percentage of high self-esteem slum young women were found to have rated their personal appearance at very good (92%), body build at very good (74%), academic performance at good (40%), health status at very good (40%) category. However, majority of the low self-esteem level slum young women reported that they have perceived their personal appearance (65%), body build (68%) and health status (45%) at fair level.

KEY WORDS :

Self-esteem,
Slum young women,
Physical appearance,
Body build, Health

How to cite this paper : Deshpande, Mugdha and Ramanamma, Desetty (2015). Self-esteem levels of slum young women and perceptions on their health status and physical appearance. *Internat. J. Med. Sci.*, 8(1&2) : 28-33.

What matters most is how you see yourself! Self-esteem is similar to self-worth (how much a person values himself or herself). Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude towards self. It is a basic human characteristic related to self awareness, general health, emotions, cognition, behaviour, life-styles etc. A positive and well organized psychological identity depends upon one's sense of self.

Self-esteem is a major key to success of women in life. The development of a high self-esteem is extremely important to the health, happiness and success of women. The degree of self-esteem (high or low) influences every aspects of our life as it has profound effect on the thinking processes, health, emotions, desires, values, choices and goals. High level of self-esteem develops the capacity to see oneself as a healthy, lovable, having unique talents and possessing a

Paper History :

Received: 04.02.2014;
Revised : 24.08.2015;
Accepted: 22.09.2015

worthwhile personality to share with others, Further, High self-esteem is a comfortable feeling of total acceptance and love for oneself as one is respecting and valuing oneself as a worthwhile human-being, honestly seeing one's good and taking care of self and nurturing one self. So, one can become all that one is capable of being. High self-esteem is characterized by congruence between inner states, beliefs, feelings, attitudes) and outer states (health, behaviour and relationships). Exercise and sport participation can enhance mental health by offering women's positive feelings about body image, improved self-esteem, tangible experiences of competency and success with increased confidence. Self confidence is not a feeling of superiority, but of independence.

In almost every part of the world and throughout history, women have been regarded (and taught to regard themselves) as the inferior of men. Inferiority is the result of low self-esteem. Low self-esteem means helplessness, powerlessness and having depression. The major sources of low self-esteem may be triggered by being treated poorly by someone else, recently or in the past or such own judgments of himself or herself. There are many reasons why women suffer from low self-esteem. Perceived lack of self-worth, uncontrollable jealousy, relationship break-ups, high levels of anxiety or stress, inability to think positively, mild depression and many other issues affect the self-esteem of millions of women every day. Low self-esteem is the constant companion for many people mainly girls / women, who experience depression, anxiety, phobias, psychosis delusional thinking or who have an illness or a disability. People with low self-esteem often have a hard time for leading a happy and successful life. Sachar *et al.* (1997) observed that self-esteem scores were lower in a older girls. Each person is responsible for his own self-esteem and should take measures to improve it for improving their lives. Self-esteem growth takes place in the large context of relationships firstly in the family relationship. The good interpersonal relationship between family members, cultural values and behaviour makes the person more worthy.

According to the second National Family Health Survey, only fifty two per cent of women in India ever consulted on decisions about their own health. Poverty is the major factor to the ill health and malnutrition of women because of traditional values. These problems

are mostly seen in urban slums which can be caused by cultural rigidity and communication gap within the family members and this situation mostly affects their self-esteem as a whole. Harper and Marshall (1992) study indicated that when looking at youth problems and their relationship to self-esteem, it is found that women problems are observed mainly in the areas of health, physical development, adjustment in family and work related matters.

Women are regarded as 'better half' of the society. But in reality, our society still male dominated and women are not treated as equal partners both inside and outside the four walls of the house. In fact, they are treated as weak and dependant on men. As such Indian women enjoy an unfavourable status in society. This situation is seen in all families in India mostly in urban slums where the women are always under the dread of men or head of the family. A life for women in these slums is a double edged sword. Many of these women lost the freedom and mobility. These slum women share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the family, maintaining the household activities even then they suffer from both economically and socially invisible. Besides this, they do not have right to talk in front of family members to take decisions on their own or doing the work which they like. They are living like a Robot who controlled by men. Moving out of the depths of poverty becomes harder without having sound health, education and skills necessary for assessing better opportunities. This entire situation adversely affects their whole personality mainly on self-esteem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 200 slum young women was chosen at random from the 10 slum areas of Parbhani town of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. Out of which 30 were from the middle SES group and the remaining 170 were from the low SES group. The age group of the slum young women ranged between 20yrs and 25yrs. Out of 200 randomly selected slum young women, most of them were 20-22 yrs old (65%) and non-matriculates (48%) Eighty seven per cent of the respondents had siblings and many of them were first born (42%) among the siblings. Majority of them got married very early *i.e.* below 18 yrs of age and had parent's in-laws. The self-esteem scale for women developed by Kapadia and Varma

(1993) was administered on them for assessing their self-esteem levels. Kuppuswamy (1989) socio-economic status scale for urban population revised by Patnam (1992) was used to assess the socio-economic status of sample slum young women. A structured cum open ended interview schedule was developed to elicit the information related to slum young women's perceptions about physical appearance, body build and health status. The collected information is pooled, tabulated, analyzed and discussed

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With regard to family background, relatively a higher percentage of the selected slum young women belonged to extended type families, large size families and families having income between Rs. 3,000 and

Rs.5,000 per month. Sixty six per cent of them had non-literate, unskilled mothers belonged to the age group of 45-55yrs. on the other hand, many of their fathers were non-matriculantes, unskilled workers and they were 45-55yrs old.

Irrespective of the SES group majority (57%) of the selected slum young women were assessed to have low level self-esteem followed by medium level self-esteem (29%) and high level self-esteem (13%). From statistical analysis it was confirmed that SES of the slum young women was found to have significant influence on self-esteem levels of slum young women. These findings are in line with the findings stated by Patnam (1992), Sutavane and Dessety (2008), about the influence of SES on the self-esteem levels of college going girls (Fig 1).

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between self-

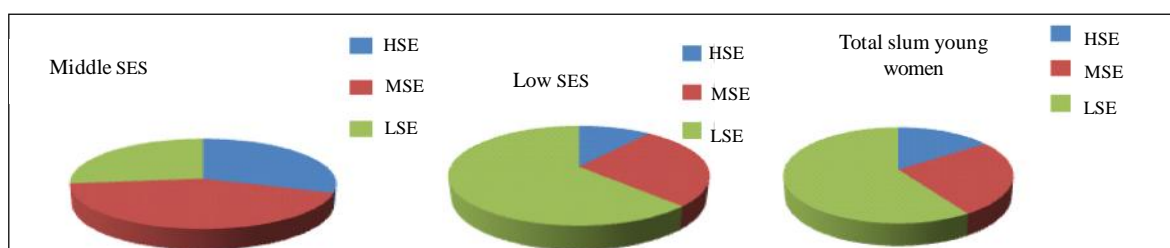


Fig. 1 : Relationship between self-esteem levels of slum young women and their SES

Table 1 : Relationship between self-esteem levels of selected slum young women and their perception towards health status			
Health status of slum young women	Percentages of self-esteem levels of slum young women (200)		
	HSE (27)	MSE (59)	LSE (114)
Very good	40.74 (11)	15.25 (09)	3.50 (04)
Good	29.62 (08)	49.15 (29)	39.47 (45)
Fair	22.22 (06)	23.74 (14)	11.42 (13)
Poor	7.42 (02)	11.86 (07)	45.61 (52)

Figures in parentheses indicate number of slum young women

Statistical analysis results of table 1 within self-esteem levels

Health status of slum young women	Self-esteem levels		
	H vs M	M vs L	H vs L
Very good	2.38*	-	-
Good	1.85 ^{NS}	1.26 ^{NS}	1.01 ^{NS}
Fair	0.10 ^{NS}	1.93 ^{NS}	1.29 ^{NS}
Poor	-	5.57**	-
Health status of slum young women	HSE	MSE	LSE
a vs b	0.99 ^{NS}	3.71**	-
b vs c	0.80 ^{NS}	2.83**	3.66**
c vs d	-	1.43 ^{NS}	4.06**
a vs d	-	0.48 ^{NS}	-

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS= Non-significant

esteem levels of selected slum young women and their perception towards health status. In the group of slum young women having high self-esteem, 40 per cent of them reported to have very good health status followed by good (29%), fair (22%) and poor (7%) health status. The corresponding percentages of medium self-esteem level respondents were 15, 49, 23, 11 and also the corresponding percentage of low self-esteem respondents were 3, 39, 11, 45, respectively. Relatively and significantly

a higher percentage of slum young women having high and medium labels of self-esteem reported to have very good and good health status. Statistical analysis indicates that better the health status of slum young women, higher their levels of self-esteem. This gives a signal to all young women to improve their health status which makes them to be active, happy and healthy to lead peaceful life. It is not surprise to note that, significantly a higher percentage of low self-esteem slum young women realized that their

Table 2 : Relationship between self-esteem levels of selected slum young women and their perception about physical appearance

Perception about physical appearance of slum young women	Percentages of self-esteem levels of slum young women (200)		
	HSE (27)	MSE (59)	LSE (114)
Very good	92.59 (25)	83.05 (49)	19.29 (22)
Good	7.41 (02)	16.95 (10)	14.92 (17)
Fair	-	-	65.78 (75)

Figures in parentheses indicate number of slum young women

Statistical analysis results of Table 2 within self-esteem levels

Perception about physical appearance of slum young women	Self-esteem levels		
	H vs M	M vs L	H vs L
Very good	1.26 ^{NS}	10.49**	11.45**
Good	-	0.35 ^{NS}	-
Fair	-	-	-
Perception about physical appearance of slum young women	HSE	MSE	LSE
a vs b	-	8.58**	0.66 ^{NS}
b vs c	-	-	6.07**
a vs c	-	-	6.76**

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS= Non-significant

Table 3 : Relationship between self-esteem levels of selected slum young women and their perception about body build

Perception about body build of slum young women	Percentages of self-esteem levels of slum young women (200)		
	HSE (27)	MSE (59)	LSE (114)
Very good	74.07 (20)	54.24 (32)	14.91 (17)
Good	22.22 (06)	35.59 (21)	16.66 (19)
Fair	3.71 (01)	10.17 (06)	68.42 (78)

Figures in parentheses indicate number of slum young women

Statistical analysis results of Table 3 within self-esteem levels

Perception about body build of slum young women	Self-esteem levels		
	H vs M	M vs L	H vs L
Very good	1.88 ^{NS}	5.55**	6.66**
Good	-	2.71**	-
Fair	-	-	-
Perception about body build of slum young women	HSE	MSE	LSE
a vs b	-	2.06*	0.29 ^{NS}
b vs c	-	-	7.02**
a vs c	-	-	8.30**

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

NS= Non-significant

health status was poor. Therefore, there is a grate need to arrange mass health education programmes to educate slum women to take care of their health as women's health is the key factor for family empowerment. These findings art in agreement with the result reported by Sagan (1990), Mendelson *et al.* (1996), Benyamini *et al.* (2004), Reizes and Mutran (2006), Sutavane and Dessety (2008), Mas *et al.* (2011) in their research study about high self-esteem college going girls found to have very good health status and it was *vice versa* in case of low self-esteem college going girls found to have fair health status.

Table 2 shows that a large percentage of high (92%) and medium (83%) self-esteem slum young women were found to have perceived their physical appearance as very good followed by good physical appearance (7-16%). In the group of low self-esteem slum young women, majority (65%) of them perceived their physical appearance at fair level followed by good (14%) and very good (14%) physical appearance. It can be inferred that, self-perception about physical appearance of slum young women played a significant role on their self-esteem levels. The statistical analysis indicates that, significantly a higher percentage of high or medium self-esteem slum young women rated their physical appearance as very good and good. This depicts that what matters most is how you see yourself. These results are in accordance with the results reported by Ikeda and Patterson (2000), Caposella (2008), Sutavane and Dessety (2008) in their research studies that body image was the significant contributing factor to self-esteem women.

Table 3 indicates the relationship between self-esteem levels of slum young women and their perception about body build. In the group of slum young women having high and medium self-esteem levels, majority (74 - 54%) of them were found to have perceived their body build as very good as it is gender of appropriate followed by good (22-35%) and fair (3-10%) body build. However, in the group of slum young women having low self-esteem, majority (68%) of them rated their body build at fair level followed by good (16%) and very good (14%) body build.

This clearly shows that, what matters most is low you see yourself. The statistical analysis indicates, few significant differences were noted in self-esteem levels of slum young women having perception towards their

body build. However, the slum young women's perceptions towards body build were found to have significant influence on their self-esteem levels. This depicts that what matters most is how you see yourself. The results are partially similar with the results reported by Shinde and Patnam (2007), Sutavane and Dessety (2008), Sharma and Patnam (2013) in their research about relationship between self-esteem levels of slum young women and their perception about body build studies.

Conclusion :

It is concluded that, slum young women's attitude towards physical appearance and their perceptions towards body build were found to have significant influence on their self-esteem levels. Statistical analysis indicates that better the health status of slum young women, higher their levels of self-esteem. This gives a signal to all young women to improve their health status which makes them to be active, happy and healthy to lead peaceful life. It is not surprise to note that, significantly a higher percentage of low self-esteem slum young women realized that their health status was poor. Therefore, there is a grate need to arrange mass health education programmes to educate slum women to take of their health as women's health is the key factor for family empowerment.

Authors' affiliations :

MUGDHA DESHPANDE, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home Science, Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Agricultural University, PARBHANI (M.S.) INDIA
Email: om.verma@shiats.edu.in

REFERENCES

- Benyamini, Y., Leventhal, H. and Leventhal, E.A.(2004).** Self-rated oral health as an independent predictor of self-rated general health, self-esteem and life satisfaction. *Soc. Sci. & Med.*, **59**: 1109 –1116.
- Caposella, A. (2008).** Effects of social class and body image on self-esteem. *J. Undergraduate Psychol. Res.*, **3** : 34-40.
- Harper, Juliet and Marshall, Elizabeth (1992).** Adolescents problems and their relationship to self-esteem. *Adolescence*, **26** (104) : 799-808.
- Kapadia, Sagufa and Varma, Amita (1993).** Self-esteem scale for women. College of Home Science, Baroda (GUJARAT) INDIA.



Kuppuswamy, B. (1989). *Socio-economics status scale*. Published by Manasayam, DELHI, INDIA.

Mas, M.B., Navarro, M.L.A., Jimener, A.M.L., Perez, I.T. Sancher, C.D.R. and Gregorio, M.A. (2011). Personality traits and eating disorders: Mediating effects of self-esteem and perfectionism. *Internat. J. Clinic. & Health Psychol.* **11** (2): 205-227.

Mendelson, B. White, D. and Mendelson, M. (1996). Self-esteem and body esteem: Effects of gender, age and weight. *J. Appl. Develop. Psychol.*, **17** : 321-346.

Patnam, V.N. (1992). Women self –esteem development and influencing factors. Final Report (1990-1992) the project director, IDRCHDFS Research Network M.S.U., Baroda (GUJARAT) INDIA.

Patterson (2000). Self-esteem in youth factors relating to overall self-Esteem. Thesis, Department of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University, Wellington, CANADA.

Reizes D.C. and Mutran E.J. (2006). Self and health : Factors that encourage self-esteem and functional health. *J. Gerontology : Series B : Psychol. Sci. & Soc. Sci.*, **61**:44-51.

Sachar, R.K., Singh, H., Singh, H., Soni, R.K., Dhiman,

B., Gill, P.J.S., Dhot, R., Raizada, N., Singh, Harinder, Singh, Hari, Dhiman, Balraj and Dhot, Ramnik (1997). A study of self-esteem and its correlates amongst adolescent girls (9 – 19 years) in rural Punjab. *Indian J. Preventive & Soc. Med.*, **28** : 65-73.

Sagan (1990). Self-esteem of teenage girls its characteristics and its characteristics and influencing factors.

Sharma, Neha and Patnam, V.N. (2013). Self-esteem of University female students and its influencing factors. Thesis, Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbhani, M.S. (INDIA).

Shinde, V.D. and Patnam, V.N. (2007). Self esteem of rural teenage girls and influencing factors. Thesis, Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbhani, M.S. (INDIA).

Sutavane P.M. and Dessety R. (2008). Self - esteem of university female studentst and its relation with their background variables. Thesis, Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbhani, M.S. (INDIA).

□WEBLIOGRAPHY:

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the youth self- image Princeton. University press / [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self esteem..](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self_esteem..)

8th
Year
★★★★★ of Excellence ★★★★★